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DEMOCRATIC EXPANSION.

BY HORATIO W. SEYMOUR.

THE question whether the Philippine Islands were to be American territory or not was settled, probably for all time, when, by the votes of Democrats as well as of Republicans, the Treaty of Paris was ratified by the Senate. There is only one party issue now, and it may be expressed with considerable clearness in these words: Shall we adopt as a settled policy the British system of crown colonies in defiance of precedent, or shall we preserve and strengthen the American system of expansion under which the Republic became great and prosperous?

This is a question, practically ignored thus far by Democrats individually and collectively, which the National Convention soon to be held at St. Louis might profitably take into consideration. In the Democratic platforms and speeches which have gained attention during the last five years, generalizations on the subject of Imperialism and frank declarations in favor of a scuttle have been freely indulged in, as if there were no alternative. In no case has any man or any group of men proposed that the Government should assume toward the remote possessions of the United States the attitude which it held without variation toward all of its acquisitions preceding the war with Spain. Confusion, arising from a denunciation of Imperialism and from suggestions of an impossible surrender in the Philippines, has obscured what would appear to be a fundamental Democratic principle, viz., that democratic-republican government should and must follow the flag. From a Democratic standpoint any other policy would appear to be inadmissible. Imperialism is not to be thought of. Withdrawal from the Philippines on any terms is not to be thought of. The islands are ours, and they are not to be given up, and they are not to be governed as by a despot. Without

reference to their distance from the mainland or to the barbarism of a large portion of their population, they are entitled to every guaranty of freedom which Americans enjoy at home.

We are face to face with a danger often predicted and, in some matters of minor importance, perhaps, actually presented—that the Constitution will be amended by the judgment of a court instead of by the orderly processes provided by law. A change of opinion by one member of the Supreme Court would have engrafted upon the Constitution an amendment more far-reaching in its consequences than any that resulted from the Civil War. With one recruit on that bench for absolutism, when the insular cases were decided, it is probable that no man now living would have seen the day when the Philippines could be more than a royal demesne, a field for selfish exploitation by favored interests, a safe retreat for political adventurers, a graveyard for American soldiers, and a dumping-place for American treasure. With one recruit for absolutism on that bench, powers would have been conferred upon the President which have no parallel outside of Russia and China. The supremacy of Congress, that is, of the people, over newly acquired territory, unquestioned for more than a century, was affirmed by the Supreme Court in these cases by a division of five to four.

The question of government for the Philippines concerns Americans quite as much as it does the natives of those islands. Are the United States to maintain anywhere on this planet a government under which no honest American would risk his life, liberty and property? How are these islands to be developed and made of use to the Republic, to the world and to civilization? What security are enterprise and capital to have there? Is labor to have its just reward, and are the weak to be safeguarded as against the strong?

There can be no future for the Philippines which any American can contemplate with pride, or in which any American not favored by some political or military ring can hope to profit, which is not hedged about on every hand by the Constitution and the laws. The danger narrowly escaped in the Supreme Court is not removed by any means. It is still within the power of ambitious men, working upon the ignorance or prejudices of a subservient Congress, to provide by legislative methods for an unlimited prolongation of the very conditions which the Court,

so far as the President is concerned, has solemnly condemned. The Democratic opportunity is to be found in this situation. With some necessary modifications, it is the British colonial system and not the American system of expansion which we are invited by the Administration to support in the Philippines.

In its origin the British system was an imperial measure for the extension of commerce, and nothing more. The government used the resources of the people to promote the business interests of a class. It carried on wars, in which the lives and treasure of the Empire were freely sacrificed, for the benefit of trade. It gave to favored individuals and companies chartered rights to plunder and ravage in its name.

Lord Grenville summarized with great frankness the British idea of a colonial empire in the eighteenth century when he said: "Colonies are only settlements in distant parts of the world for the improvement of trade." The incapacity of King, ministers and Parliament to rise above this sordid view in the case of the American colonies, cost the Empire its fairest possessions, and taught most of its statesmen a lesson from which, in some quarters of the world, the British government has profited materially.

It is noteworthy, for example, that in Canada and Australasia the British, discarding their own policy and imitating the principles of expansion which characterized the great Republic for more than a century, have established self-governing provinces, which lack independence only in name. The colonial policy which we have asserted in the Philippines is the system of the British commercial classes, as bluntly interpreted by Grenville. It has been fastened upon the Republic at a time when the successors of the British authors of the idea are abandoning it and safeguarding the Empire by following the original American plan. The British of to-day are profiting by the wisdom of our ancestors, which we are ignoring or repudiating.

In the course of the remarks above referred to on the subject of British colonization, Lord Grenville said that the system would be intolerable and not to be considered for an instant except on the lines of exploitation which he had indicated. More than one of the controlling statesmen at Washington have declared that, if the Constitution and the laws must necessarily follow the flag into the Philippines, "we cannot get out of there too soon."

Wherever the original British system of colonization still obtains without modification, it is supported by force at great expense. Wars are frequent, and the Empire is weakened thereby. Wherever the British Empire has any reason to believe that it has strength in men and money, it will be found that the American system of expansion has been adopted. The difference is that which always is found between tyranny and strife on one side and justice and peace on the other.

This broken-down British system it is now sought to establish under the protection of the American flag. No good can come of the attempt abroad or at home. If we shall adhere to it, we shall err with knowledge, with eyes wide open to an experience which we of all people should profit by, and with a certainty that, sooner or later, when confronted by disaster and disgrace, we shall be compelled in sorrow to retrace our steps.

If there is to be a Democratic measure for the government of the Philippines, its authors will find in the ordinance of 1787 the principles which governed the Democratic party through all the years during which that organization guided the continental development of the Republic. This ordinance providing for the government of the Northwest Territory was the first American essay in expansion. The remarkable gifts of that generation of Americans were not shown more clearly in any other matter than they were in this. The Constitution itself, which came a little later—for it is to be remembered that the ordinance was the work of the old Federation and not of the United States—was not in any one respect more notable.

Under the Articles of Confederation, which were superseded by the Constitution, no authority was conferred upon the Continental Congress to acquire or to govern new territory. That power was assumed not by the president of that body, but by the body itself. The ordinance which it adopted provided for the institution of a provisional government under the control of Congress. The governor and judges were to be appointed by Congress. The governor and his council were authorized to legislate subject to the veto of Congress. Elections for a Territorial Assembly were provided for, and, when certain conditions were fulfilled, organization and representation in Congress as a Territory were guaranteed.

More important than all these, however, it was decreed that

the Territory should be dedicated to free institutions, that there should be no slavery, that liberty of conscience should prevail, that education should be fostered, that rights of property should be respected, that nothing should be done therein to impair the obligations of contracts and that commerce should be free forever. On these lines, every one of the five noble States which ultimately were created out of the wilderness wrote its bill of rights and attached it as a preamble to its Constitution.

A few months later, when the Constitution was drawn and the federal government was established, the only change that it was found necessary to make in the ordinance was to bring it into line with the Constitution in the matter of the appointment of officers in the Territory. Thereafter, instead of being named by Congress, they were appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Constitution expressly conferred upon Congress the power to make all needful regulations for the control of the Territories of the United States, and it is this authority, sanctioned by the precedents of more than one hundred years, which the Court, by a majority of only one, vindicated in the insular cases.

With these guaranties, the Northwest Territory did not become a field for exploitation by adventurers hanging on the favor of those temporarily in power at the seat of government; on the contrary, it became a wonderful theatre for the display of all those heroic qualities which have made the American pioneer notable throughout the world. Immigration began to flow spontaneously, and swept in mighty tides through the forests and on to the very limits of American possession, where it paused for a time, eager to resume its westward course. It subdued the wilderness, created States, established industries, laid broad and deep the foundations of religion and education, and developed a society which, for vigor and for virtue, was and is second to no other in the world.

It need not be imagined that all this would have been possible under such a government as that which is proposed for the Philippines, which is essentially autocratic, which certainly cannot appeal to freemen and holds out but a feeble hope even to the native. It would not. Free institutions attract freemen, just as autocratic institutions attract and develop favorites, adventurers and slaves. If it be urged that the government of the

Northwest Territory was autocratic at the beginning, it is to be said that, even under the sway of the earlier governors, it enjoyed all of the guaranties above enumerated, and that there never was a time when official authority was not strictly limited by these considerations. There is a striking difference between a governor exercising limited powers and one acting, as has been the case in the Philippines, under little restraint and without a pledge of any sort as to the future.

The American system of expansion, as foreshadowed by the ordinance of 1787, was a radical departure from the British system, with which its authors were very familiar. At that stage of American development, there was little disposition on the part of men conspicuous in public affairs on this continent to follow slavishly the imperial fashions of the Old World. Then, as now, these models had their admirers and defenders; but, thanks to the intelligence and patriotism of the early Democrats, they did not prevail.

Following the august example of the ordinance of 1787 as to American expansion, from that day until the idea of maintaining dependencies after the British fashion was adopted by the Administration at Washington, there was no question by a considerable number of Americans as to the methods or the purpose of expansion. Territorial growth was to be the growth of the Republic. The growth of the Republic was of necessity to contemplate in due time, as Congress should direct, the establishment of self-governing Territories and States, all under the beneficent sway of the Constitution and the laws.

If the Philippines were not acquired for the purpose of creating American Territories and States, what was the purpose? For the first time in our history, the Treaty of Paris extended American sovereignty over new territory without a promise of citizenship for anybody. It is reasonably clear, therefore, that the Administration which negotiated that treaty contemplated a new departure in the way of colonization. By high-sounding declarations of a desire to confer great benefits upon the natives of the islands, the purpose to enlist the American people in a new and dangerous adventure beyond the seas was pretty well concealed.

Every annexation preceding that which resulted from the late war with Spain was followed speedily by action in Congress extending the Constitution and the laws over the lands thus ac-

quired. The humblest American did not hesitate to follow the Constitution and the laws. There was no attempt at monopoly and favoritism. There was no despotism to deprive pioneers of equal opportunities, and there was a guaranty of self-government and citizenship for the future which they knew would be observed. In the Philippines, no such conditions prevail. Natives and American citizens are alike in the dark as to the Government's intentions, and they are alike oppressed by an autocracy which, unless appearances are deceitful, is better calculated to promote selfish interests than to confer advantages and opportunities upon the American people as a whole. The Philippines will be closed to the average American so long as they are held as alien territory, with no promise by either political party in this country that they are not soon to be abandoned.

Subject only to the Constitution, the power of Congress over the Philippines, as over every other Territory of the United States, is supreme. In the days of Democratic ascendancy, this power was used to promote the general welfare. The Northwest Territory, Louisiana, Florida, Oregon and the Mexican cession speedily passed through the stage of appurtenant territory and became organized Territories of the United States, with a prospect of Statehood. Then, as now, there were Americans who declaimed against the policy of incorporating wildernesses and savages into our system, but they were not Democrats. Then, as now, there were Americans who favored retreat, abandonment and withdrawal within our ancient borders, but they were not Democrats.

Probably no one will assert that the development of the Republic would have been possible if, acting upon the apprehension of people in the Eastern States who could see nothing in annexation but the absorption of an alien population differing in manners, laws and customs, no provision had been made for a voting citizenship confined to those who were duly qualified. It was not the fact that everybody could vote which brought immigration to the new country, but the vastly more important and more valuable fact that its government guaranteed freedom and justice, and provided for their maintenance by opening the ballot-box to those who were qualified. It is a pledge like this which is needed in the Philippines to-day.

Even if we accept the lowest possible estimate as to the number of people in the Island of Luzon who are qualified to exercise the

suffrage, we will find that they constitute a larger body of voters than appeared at the first elections in most of the new States in America. Five thousand white men was the number provided for in the ordinance of 1787 as necessary to the establishment of representative government in the Northwest Territory. A mere handful of men who were believed to be in touch with civilization and devotedly attached to American principles of government sufficed, in most of our Western States, to adopt constitutions which have since been obeyed by contented millions, and to establish laws which are even now in force.

Not a little of the opposition to the idea of establishing genuine Americanism in the Philippine Archipelago, is due more to the knowledge that American immigration will follow quickly upon the introduction of free institutions in that quarter, than it is to a disregard for the rights of the intelligent native population. If the few are to monopolize the opportunities which the new country affords, the work must be done while autocratic government obtains. With the American Constitution and laws in force in the islands, supported by representative assemblies chosen under a restricted suffrage, it would not be long before there would be voting precincts in that section of the Republic which would be as truly American as thousands that might be named in this country. If there is to be no popular government and no responsibility, such Americans as will be found there will be of the adventurer type, lawless and law-defying.

For these reasons, there should be no disposition in any influential circle to heed the doubts so freely expressed as to the capacity of the native population for self-government. There are people in Luzon, at any rate, who are qualified to vote. There are more of them than there were of the same class in the Northwest Territory and Louisiana when the Constitution and the laws were extended over them. On the other hand, there is not one American there or elsewhere who is qualified to govern without law and without responsibility.

Instead of heeding the emotional gentlemen who favor an ignoble surrender of territories bought with American blood and treasure, why should not Democrats reassert their historic faith, and declare in favor of a genuinely Democratic policy for the government and development of lands which are destined some time to reach the full stature of American Territories, and per-

haps ultimately to become States enjoying all the rights and privileges belonging to the older members of the Union?

Such freedom as the American citizen enjoys is all that the Filipino can ask. We have not offered him this freedom. On the contrary, there is nothing in the policy of the Administration to justify the belief that he is to escape despotic rule. This being the case, what wiser policy can the Democratic party adopt than to declare, in unequivocal terms, its purpose, if entrusted with power, to extend democratic Territorial government, as speedily as possible, over every foot of soil belonging to the United States? This is due to the untutored native of the islands of the sea, as well as to the American citizen and taxpayer, but it is due first of all to the American citizen and taxpayer in whose interest, in the first instance, expansion should be promoted.

This is Democratic expansion as it was known in the past. It is not a pharisaical tyranny. It is not a contemptible surrender and scuttle. It is for Americans primarily, and for uncivilized and savage races only incidentally. It contemplates the creation of self-governing Territories and, possibly, States. It deals with citizens and not with subjects. It is a policy which disarms rebellion and leads even barbarians to hope.

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